methods; and how physical efficiency may be improved without increasing the number of calories in diets. Examples are also cited of the importance of knowledge of caloric values of food materials from the point of view of economics otherwise. When read in conjunction with the articles which are to follow in this *Journal* on the subject of nutrition, it is hoped that this outline will form a practical basis for the intelligent prescription of food materials.

Men and Books

COLONEL F. A. C. SCRIMGER, V.C.

BY W. B. HOWELL, M.D.

London, Eng.

Francis Alexander Carron Scrimger was born in Montreal on February 7, 1880. He was the younger son of the Rev. John Scrimger, Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal. His mother's maiden name was Charlotte Gairdner. Both parents were of Lowland Scotch descent. He was educated at the Montreal High School and McGill University. When he left school to enter the Arts Faculty of McGill his parents took it for granted that he would study law after taking his B.A. degree. That he took up the study of medicine instead was largely a matter of chance. He spent one of the summer vacations of his Arts course with a geological survey in Manitoba. When the time came for the party to return, the cook was ill and could not be moved. It was therefore decided to leave someone behind to look after him. At the cook's earnest request Scrimger was the one chosen. It was a wise choice. The cook had the discernment to see that whatever happened, Scrimger would think first of him and last of himself. Scrimger was left with directions to apply hot fomentations. No one who ever knew him would need to be told that the fomentations were applied regularly, and applied hot. So hot were they applied that in the process of preparing them Scrimger's hands became painfully red and inflamed from repeated scalding. The cook recovered under his ministrations, from what Scrimger in later life thought was either typhoid or appendicitis. On his return home, Scrimger announced to his parents that he had made up his mind to go in for the study of medicine. He took his B.A. degree with honours in biology in 1901, and his M.D. in 1905.

At that time it was the custom at the Royal Victoria Hospital to fill vacancies in the house staff each spring with the men who had taken the highest standing in the graduating class of the year. Scrimger's standing at his final examination was not high enough to entitle him to a place, but he was nevertheless chosen through the influence of the late James Stewart, then Professor of Medicine at McGill and Chief Physician to the Royal Victoria Hospital. Scrimger spent four years on the house staff, one of them on the medical side, two on the surgical, and one as admitting officer.

So completely was he engrossed in his work during these years that, although he was devotedly attached to his parents who lived only a quarter of a mile from the Hospital, he could only find time to visit them once every two or three weeks. This absorption was very characteristic of him, and was due partly to his rigid sense of duty to his patients and partly to his intense interest in his work. One of his duties as admitting officer was to appear in court and give evidence as to the condition while in hospital of patients who had had accidents and were suing for damages. The impression that he gave to people who did not know him was deceptive. His unassuming bearing, his thoughtful face, his spectacles, and his low voice, were suggestive more of the somewhat diffident student than that of what he really was, a man of action. Upon one occasion an attorney with a loud voice and bullying manner, who was cross-examining him, bawled at the future V.C., "Speak up, Dr. Scrimger, don't be afraid of me".

In 1909 Scrimger went to Europe for postgraduate study. He worked for some months under Professor Bier at Berlin. One of his friends meeting him at this time was shocked at his haggard appearance, and found that he was so engrossed in his work that he was neglecting his meals and not getting enough sleep. On his return to Montreal in 1910 he was appointed clinical assistant at the Royal Victoria Hospital, and demonstrator in surgery at McGill. In 1913 he was promoted to the position of associate in surgery at the Royal Victoria Hospital. He joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1912, and was appointed medical officer of the Montreal Heavy Brigade of the Canadian Garrison Artillery. In the spring of 1914 he was promoted to the rank of captain. At the outbreak of war he went, as medical officer to the 14 Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment, to Valcartier and afterwards to England. While in camp on Salisbury Plain he was taken ill with broncho-pneumonia, and his battalion went to France without him. However, very soon after his recovery, he managed by pulling wires to be sent to France where he was attached for duty to a base hospital at Wimereux. Three weeks later he was transferred to No. 2 Canadian

Field Ambulance. The second battle of Ypres was then beginning and Scrimger had his first experience of shell fire. He was with the Field Ambulance for a very short time before being sent to rejoin the 14th Battalion. From April 22nd to April 25th he worked among the wounded in an inferno of shell fire, oblivious of peril and the discomfort due to fatigue, to lack of sleep, to filth. On the 25th a group of farm buildings, one of which he was using as a dressing station was heavily shelled and caught fire. Scrimger directed the removal of the wounded, and carried one of them, Captain H. F. McDonald, to a moat where the two men lay partly in the water under the precarious shelter of a bank of earth which threatened any minute to slide down and overwhelm them. Scrimger crouched over McDonald to protect him from flying splinters of shell and from being buried alive. When the firing slackened, he went in search of stretcher bearers and had McDonald carried to a dressing station. In a diary which Scrimger kept for a short time, he says of the incident. "I got all the wounded out, among them a staff officer. We lay together at the side of a ditch while they poured in seventy-five six-inch shells, five within but fifteen feet of us, and we were half smothered in mud. I got a good deal of credit for the show and understand something may come of it." Something did come of it—the Victoria Cross.

Scrimger's behaviour during this time is not to be explained merely as that of a brave man rising to the occasion. It was a revelation of another side of his character. There was in him a rigidity, a fixity of purpose, which made him inexorable in going through with anything he made up his mind to do. Nothing inspired him to effort like opposition or difficulty. The German army might try to prevent him from doing his job; he would go on with that job until he had finished it or been blown to pieces.

He remained with the 14th Battalion until December 31, 1915, and was then sent to No. 1 Canadian General Hospital at Etaples. Five weeks later he was invalided to England for infection of one of his fingers which had to be amputated. After he recovered he was on duty in England for a year, and then, in March, 1917, was sent to No. 3 Canadian Clearing Station at Remy Siding with the rank of Major. During the summer and autumn of that year he worked incessantly, for there was hard fighting in front of Ypres. During the following winter the work was lighter, and Scrimger took to visiting the nursing sisters' quarters. His fellow-officers are said to have accused him at this time of being "almost human".

When the great German attack of 1918 began a shell fell among the huts occupied by the nursing sisters of the Clearing Station, but fortunately did not explode and no one was hurt. Thereafter there was occasional shelling of the neighbourhood and the nursing sisters were sent to St. Omer. The commanding officer of No. 3 received orders to send a surgical team to reinforce a C.C.S. of the 5th Army, east of Amiens. Scrimger, now senior surgeon of No. 3, urged his commanding officer to send him and accordingly he was chosen to go. His team consisted, besides himself, of Captain W. G. Lyall, who acted as his anæsthetist, two operating orderlies, and a batman. One member of the team, Nursing Sister Ellen Carpenter, who had for some time been working with him in the operating room and had been sent to St. Omer, was called for on the way. The C.C.S. to which Scrimger and his team were sent was near Roye. The wounded were being brought in in great numbers, and the team worked incessantly for three days and nights. Then, as the Germans were rapidly advancing, all nursing sisters were ordered to withdraw, and he was left without his operating-room nurse. The work of the C.C.S. soon became that of a Field Ambulance dressing station. A little later its personnel was ordered to evacuate camp and proceed towards the base. There were still 40 to 50 severely wounded men who would have been left behind to fall into the hands of the enemy. This was more than Scrimger could stand, and he and his team and an Irish R.A.M.C. officer stayed behind. They carried the wounded to a neighbouring road which was crowded with retreating artillery, with ammunition and transport wagons, and begged accommodation for them. In time all were disposed of, some even being carried on gun carriages. Not till then, did he feel free to leave. He and his team walked off with the greater part of the equipment on wheeled stretchers. They even took with them their operating table. Their personal effects were left behind.

All the technical equipment of the C.C.S. fell into the hands of the enemy. By this time the thin line of infantry which was holding back the enemy was close to the camp. Scrimger and his team, wheeling their stretchers, walked to Mont Didier, a distance of twenty miles, arriving about midnight. They found there Nursing Sister Carpenter working among the wounded and the team was once more complete. There followed days when on their way further down the lines of communication they set up their operating table and worked over the wounded, sometimes in houses, sometimes in sheds, once at least in a field. Upon one occasion, in a village where the inhabitants were unfriendly to the British, Scrimger could not at first get accommodation for Nursing Sister Carpenter, so that she could get a night's sleep. Scrimger helped himself to a mattress in one house and carried it to another, the front window of which he burst open. He put the mattress on the floor

and there the nursing sister got her night's rest. There was nothing about Scrimger when he was thoroughly angry that encouraged argument or even discussion, though he did not lose control of his temper or raise his voice, and there was little change in the expression of his face.

In April, 1918, Scrimger and his team returned to No. 3 C.C.S. and his engagement to Nursing Sister Carpenter was announced. The wedding took place in September. After the honeymoon, Scrimger returned to France with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and was for some time in charge of the surgical side of No. 3 Canadian General Hospital. Later, after peace was declared, he was for three months on the staff of the Plastic Surgery Hospital at Sidcup. He returned to Montreal in May, 1919, was demobilized and went back to civil practice. He was that year appointed assistant surgeon to the Royal Victoria Hospital. In 1934 he was advanced to the rank of surgeon, and in January, 1936, he became director of the Department of Surgery and Associate Professor of Surgery at McGill. He was appointed Surgeon-in-Chief of the Children's Memorial Hospital in 1934.

As the years after the War went by, Scrimger worked harder and harder. When he reached an age at which he would have been wise to take life easily, he was as unsparing of himself as he had been when he was young. His private practice steadily increased. More and more responsibility was laid on his shoulders at the Royal Victoria Hospital. He gave a great deal of time and thought to teaching and to preparing papers to be read upon medical subjects. He was appointed consulting surgeon to the Laurentide Pulp & Paper Company, and had often to motor at night to Shawinigan to operate, a distance there and back of about 200 miles. Many times his usual strenuous day's work followed a night spent in this way. The short holiday he took every summer at Bic, where he had a cottage, was almost as strenuous as his working days. His chief amusement there was sailing, his crew being his children and their friends; another was being his own stonemason and building additions to his property.

In November, 1934, he received sudden unmistakable warning that the time had come for him to stop overworking his body. On his way to a meeting of surgeons at Philadelphia when he was lying in his Pullman berth he was attacked by a sudden violent pain which extended from the region of the heart into the neck. He at once realized the significance of the pain, and reaching for his notebook wrote a message to his wife.

He then sent a telegram to his friend Dr. Eltinge at Albany, describing his condition. Dr. Eltinge met him at the station and took him in an ambulance to a hospital. He was brought home shortly afterwards and for six weeks was kept at complete rest. He submitted to this treatment with characteristic thoroughness, but with self-forgetfulness, equally characteristic. On resuming his duties he continued to work too hard. He received no second warning. The next attack occurred on February 13, 1937, and after a few hours ended in death.

Scrimger was a man of unusual ability and character. He was a born surgeon. Sound in diagnosis, sound in judgment, he was a quick and dexterous operator. He had the power of making up his mind quickly, one of the most important gifts of a good operator; and he knew what very few surgeons know, when to stop.

He inherited the best qualities of his Lowland Scotch forefathers. He was a "quiet" man, to a certain extent "dour". His inflexible honesty, helped perhaps by his sense of the ridiculous, kept him free from even the slightest taint of humbug or snobbery. There was not an atom of laziness in his composition. It was this that led to his death at a comparatively early age, for he allowed his work to kill him. Though he had complete confidence in himself he was without conceit. He was never heard to allude to his V.C. nor to any of his other achievements during the Great War. No one ever practised his profession with less mercenary motives. A public patient got just as much of his attention as a private one. What faults he had were of the kind that the hosts of friends who mourn him would not have wished to see amended.

—(By permission of "The Canadian Who Was Who.")

THE POST HOC ERGO PROPTER HOC FALLACY IN MEDICINE

BY ROBERT DAWSON RUDOLF

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I almost feel that I should apologize for calling your attention to the subject of this paper, but surely it is an important one. Are we not all apt to assume too easily that because something follows something else it must be due to it? in other words that the forerunner is the cause of the aftercomer?

The difficulty of attributing a right cause to something is very great, and mistakes have led to all sorts of errors in diagnosis and treatment. As E. Graham Howe[1] says: "If we are to be accurate we must recognize not a cause but always a relationship, and the advantages derived from our knowledge of bacteriology have to some extent been outweighed and lost by the way in which it has been conceded an importance out of balance and beyond its due, by tending to ignore the vital factor of variations in the patient's immunity. . . It is today generally agreed in theory, although not always